

slight disorder of her own apparel, still breathing fast and keeping tight hold of the bundle of papers.

"How soon are you going to let me have them?" he asked good-humoredly.

"Never."

"I can't permit you to leave this room until you hand them to me."

"Then I shall never leave this room!"

"You certainly shall not leave it until I have those papers."

"Then I'll remain here all my life!" she said defiantly.

"What do you expect to do when the people who live here return?"

She shrugged her pretty shoulders and presently cast an involuntary and uneasy glance around the room.

It was not a place to reassure any girl. Gilt stars were pasted all over the walls and ceiling, where also a tinsel sun and moon appeared. The constellations were interspersed with bats. The remaining decorations consisted of a cosy corner, some pasteboard trophies, red cotton-velvet hangings, several plaster casts of human hands and a frieze of half-burnt cigarettes along the mantel edge.

"Are you going to give me those papers?" he repeated, secretly amused.

"No."

"What do you expect to do with them?"

"Deliver them to Professor Elizabeth Challis, President of the National Federation of Independent Women of America."

"Is this a private enterprise of yours," he asked curiously, "or just a—playful impulse, or the militant fruition of a vast and feminine conspiracy?"

She smiled slightly.

"I suppose you mean to be impertinent, but I shall not evade answering you, Captain Jones. I am acting under orders."

"Betty's!" he inquired flippantly.

"The orders of Professor Elizabeth Challis," she said with heightened color. "Exactly. It is a conspiracy, then, complicated by riot, assault, disorderly conduct and highway robbery, isn't it?"

"You may call it what you choose."

"Oh, I'll leave that to the courts."

She said disdainfully: "We recognize no laws in the making of which we have had no part."

"There's no use in discussing that," said the governor blandly. "But I'd like to know what you suffragettes find so distasteful in that proposed bill which the mayor and—and the governor of New York have had drafted."

"It is reactionary! A miserable subterfuge! A treacherous attempt to return to the old order of things! A conspiracy to reshackle, re-enslave American womanhood with the sordid chains of domestic cares! To drive her back into the kitchen, the laundry, the nursery—back into the dark ages of dependence and acquiescence and non-resistance—back into the degraded epochs of sentimental relations with the tyrant man!"

She leaned forward in her excitement, and her sable boa slid back as she made a gesture with her expensive muff.

"Once," she said, "woman was so ignorant that she married for love! Now the national revolt has come. Neither sentiment nor impulse nor emotion shall ever again play any part in our relations with man!"

He said, trying to speak ironically: "That's a gay outlook, isn't it?"

"The outlook, Captain Jones, is straight into a glorious millennium. Marriage in the future is to mean the regeneration of the human race through cold-blooded selection in mating. Only the physically and mentally perfect will hereafter be selected as specimens for scientific propagation. All others must remain unmated—pro bono publico—and so, ultimately, human imperfection shall utterly disappear from this world!"

Her pretty enthusiasm, her earnestness, the delicious color in her cheeks, began to fascinate him. Then uneasiness returned.

"Do you know," he said cautiously, "that the governor of New York has received anonymous letters informing him that Professor Elizabeth Challis considers him a proper specimen for the—t-t-terrible purposes of s-s-scientific p-p-propagation!"

"Some traitor in our camp," she said, "wrote those letters."

"It isn't true, then, is it?"

"What isn't true?"

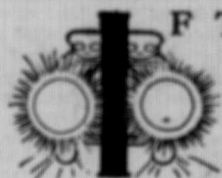
"That the governor of the great state of New York is in any danger of being seized for any such purpose."

She looked at him with a curious veiled expression in her pretty eyes, as though she were nearsighted.

"I think," she said, "Professor Challis means to seize him."

Continued Next Week

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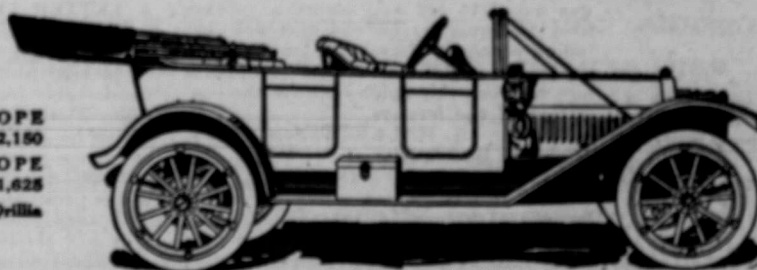
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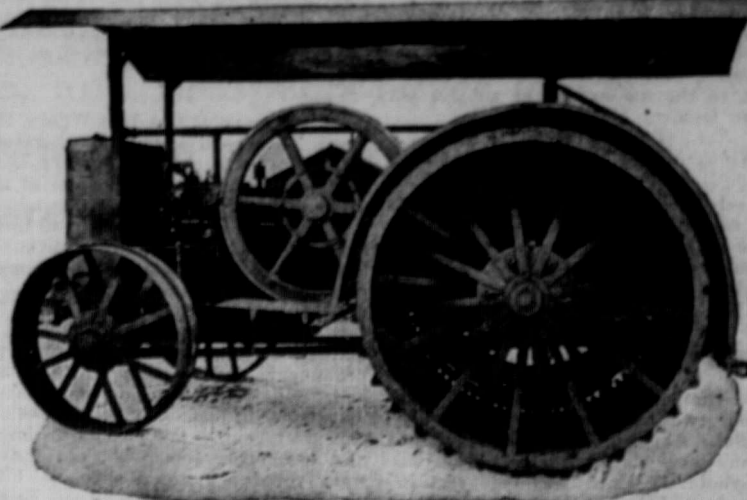
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